

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Monday, 30 June 2008 at 10.30 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr S. Askew	Mrs D.K.R. Irving
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mrs J. Ball	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr J.P. Labouchere (Chairman)
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr T.J. Lamb
Councillor Claire Bowes	Mr K. Martin
Mr R.P. Childerhouse	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr D.S. Myers
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mrs P. Quadling
Mr M. Fanthorpe	Mr J.D. Rogers (Vice-Chairman)
Lady Fisher	Mr B. Rose
Mr P.S. Francis	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr R.F. Goreham	Mr I. Sherwood
Councillor E. Gould	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr M.J. Griffin	Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mr P.J. Hewett	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mrs T. Hewett	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe	Mr D.R. Williams JP

ALSO PRESENT

Mrs J. Jenkins Chairman – Standards Committee

In Attendance

Robert Barlow	- Assistance Director (Governance)
Paul Calkin	- Strategic Director (Transformation)
Sheila Cresswell	- Member Services Officer
Phil Daines	- Development Services Manager
Mark Finch	- Chief Accountant
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Ray Johnson	- Asset Manager
Tim Leader	- Deputy Chief Executive
Helen McAleer	- Member Services Officer
Mary Palmer	- Marketing & Communications Manager

66/08MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

67/08APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Byrne, Mrs M Chapman-Allen, Mr S Chapman-Allen, Mr P Duigan, Mr A Joel, M C Jordan, Mr R Kemp, Mrs K Millbank, Mr I Monson, Mrs L Monument, Mr D Mortimer, Mr M Spencer, Mrs L Turner and Mr N Wilkin.

Action By

68/08 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 3)

Action By

The following declarations of interest were noted:

- Mr J Labouchere – personal and prejudicial interest in any items concerning the LDF by reason of being a landowner in North Elmham.
- Mr W Smith – personal and prejudicial interest in item 82/08 (LDF Site Specifics) of the Cabinet Minutes by reason of having submitted land for inclusion in the LDF and a personal interest in the following:
 - Minute No 90/08 (ARP) of the Cabinet Minutes by reason of being a non executive director of the ARPT
 - Minute No 73/08 of Development Control Committee meeting (19 May 2008) by reason of concerning the LDF
 - Minute No 89/08 of Development Control Committee meeting (9 June 2008) by reason of concerning the LDF
 - Standards Committee Minutes (27 May 2008) by reason of concerning the LDF
- Mr R Childerhouse – anything concerning the LDF in Weeting as his family are landowners within the District
- Mr G Bambridge – personal interest in any matter related to the LDF by reason of being involved in the building trade
- Mr P Cowen – personal interest in any matters concerning the LDF by reason of being an architect working in the District and a prejudicial interest in site specific items.
- Mr S Askew – personal interest in Minute No 82/08 of Cabinet minutes (10 June 2008), Minute No 73/08 of Development Control Committee minutes (19 May 2008) and Minute No 89/08 of Development Control Committee minutes (9 June 2008) by reason of having land under consideration for the LDF.
- Cllr C Bowes – personal interest in any matters related to the LDF by reason of her family being landowners. If any site specific items in the Watton and Saham areas are debated she will declare a personal and prejudicial interest for the same reason.
- Mr W Borrett – personal and prejudicial interest in the LDF as he has a family member who has put forward a site in North Elmham under the site specifics.
- Mr R Kybird – personal interest in relation to LDF matters by virtue of his profession as a builder and in Minute No 78/08 (I) of the Development Control Committee minutes (19 May 2008) by virtue of being the builder for the development.
- Mr J Rogers – personal and prejudicial interest in relation to LDF matters affecting Carbrooke generally and as he had submitted an application to include land.
- Lady K Fisher – personal interest in any item concerning Kilverstone and in Minute No 47/08 (b)(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Minutes (29 May 2008) concerning Mental Health Issues.
- Mr P Hewett – personal interest in any item concerning the LDF and a personal and prejudicial interest in any items

Action By

- concerning Shipdham by virtue of owning land and being a Parish Councillor.
- Mrs T Hewett – personal interest in any item concerning the LDF and a personal and prejudicial interest in any items concerning Shipdham by virtue of owning land and being a Parish Councillor.
 - Mr R Duffield – personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No 78/08 (i) of the Development Control Committee minutes of 19 May 2008 by virtue of being the applicant of the planning application and a personal interest in any item concerning the LDF by virtue of working in the construction industry in the district.
 - Mr F Sharpe – personal and prejudicial interest in any item concerning the Post Office by virtue of running a Post Office in Swaffham.

69/08CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The Chairman congratulated Lady Kay Fisher on her appointment as a Deputy Lieutenant of Norfolk.

He also congratulated Mr M Kiddle-Morris for his success in maintaining Beeston Post Office. It had been a terrific fight and was only one of three post offices that had been successfully retained.

Members were asked to put the date of the Chairman's Reception on 12 September 2008 in their diaries, prior to invitations being issued.

Documents re Site Specifics for the LDF would be available for collection at the end of the meeting.

Finally he commended the Cromer 'End of Pier Show' run by North Norfolk District Council, which he said was well worth a visit.

A list of engagements attended by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman was tabled, for the period 22 May – 29 June 2008, which included:

Date	Event	Host
12 th June, 2008	Summer Evening	NSPCC – West Norfolk, King's Lynn and Wisbech Branch
15 th June, 2008	Annual Civic Service	Lord Mayor of Norwich – Councillor Jeremy Hooke and Sheriff Roy Waller
25 th June, 2008	Tea – Royal Norfolk Show	General Sir R. Dannatt – President – Norfolk Show
25 th June, 2008	Reception	Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Councillor Wyndham Northam, and Managing Editor of BBC Radio Norfolk, Mr. David Clayton

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27 th June, 2008	Civic Reception	Mayor and Mayoress of Thetford, Councillor John Harding and Mrs. Lesley Harding
28 th June, 2008	Reception and Civic Performance of Seaside Special 2008	Chairman of North Norfolk District Council – Sue Arnold
29 th June, 2008	Unveiling and Dedication of commemorative plaque followed by refreshments	Swaffham Branch of the Royal Naval Association

Engagements List – Vice-Chairman

Date	Event	Host
27 th May, 2008	Long Service Certificate for Magistrates Presentation Ceremony followed by reception	Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk and Chairman of Norfolk County Council
20 th June, 2008	Summer Reception	Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Councillor Wyndham Northam

70/08 CABINET (AGENDA ITEM 5)

- (a) Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2008-2011

RESOLVED that the Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013 be adopted.

- (b) Local Development Framework – Thetford Area Action Plan – Issue and Options

A Member was concerned that all the land surrounding the railway station had been developed leaving no room for new facilities. He felt that the issue of parking should be given priority as the station was well used, providing links to Norwich, Cambridge and London.

- (c) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 June 2008 be adopted.

71/08 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 6)

- (a) Post Office Network Change Programme

Action By

Mr Kiddle-Morris thanked officers, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Working Group chaired by Mrs Matthews for their hard work and he congratulated the residents of Beeston for their community spirit.

Another Member joined in with the congratulations, but reminded Members that many other communities were losing this vital facility.

(b) Adoption

RESOLVED that the confirmed minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 13 May 2008 be adopted.

72/08 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 7)

(a) Policy Development and Review Panel 2 – Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2008 (i) Mental Health Issues (Minute 12/08)

Lady Fisher regretted that she had been unable to attend this meeting but was pleased that there had been an excellent debate. She felt that mental health issues were well considered and that the Council was working to improve matters.

(b) Work Programme

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission explained that there had been a fundamental change to Scrutiny matters particularly in relation to Outside Bodies. All Members were requested to consider their interests and to advise the Commission on what it should be considering. He encouraged Members to take an active part.

A Thetford Member commented that he hoped future development proposals for the town would be handled better than they had been in the past. He pointed out that the planning department could not insist that development included services for the town and urged that this matter be taken seriously.

The Chairman of the Commission welcomed his comments and invited him to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meetings.

The Leader of the Council pointed out that, on the Moving Thetford Forward Board, all partners had been included to ensure coherent planning.

(c) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 29 May 2008 be adopted.

Action By

73/08 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 8)

RESOLVED that the confirmed minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 19 May 2008 be adopted.

74/08 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 9)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 9 June 2008 be adopted.

75/08 GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 10)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 4 June 2008 be adopted.

76/08 STANDARDS COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 11)

- (a) Members' Interests in the Local Development Framework Process (Minute No 36/08)

Mrs J Jenkins, Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee was in attendance to present the minutes and stressed the importance and urgency of the recommendation on page 76.

The Leader of the Council told Members that the Chairman had agreed to review the recommendations at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 8 July 2008.

RESOLVED to suspend consideration of the recommendations.

- (b) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 27 May 2008 be adopted, subject to the reference back of the recommendations at Minute No 36/08.

77/08 AUDIT COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 12)

- (a) Annual Governance Statement

Members were advised that the recommendation on this item would be considered once the Statement of Accounts had been presented.

- (b) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 11 June 2008 be adopted.

78/08 APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS (AGENDA ITEM 13)

Action By

Mr R Barlow, Assistant Director - Governance gave a brief presentation to Members outlining what was covered by the Statement of Accounts. He confirmed that despite popular misconception accounts had to be backed by supporting evidence and their compilation was governed by Statute and Best Practice Guidance.

He then ran through the sections of the Statement, giving easy to follow explanations of their content, including:

Explanatory Foreword – This gave an opportunity to flush out important headlines and gave a quick view of performance.

Statement of Responsibility and Statement of Policy – These set the scene and explained the discretion used in the treatment of figures. The Council has a policy on valuation of assets. Such valuations make a big impact on the report.

Debtors / Creditors – The way these were assessed also had an influence on the figures; for instance, a judgement had to be made on whether debtors would pay or not.

Income and Expenditure Account - Reported on profit and loss showing incomings and outgoings.

Statement of Movement on General Fund Balance – Showed the money that was available for future events. It was important that it stayed healthy.

Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses (STRGL) – Showed if the value of the business had gone up or down.

Balance Sheet – This was a snapshot, only valid for one day of the year (31 March). It showed all assets and liabilities and by taking one from the other the net worth could be calculated.

The importance of valuations was explained. They must reflect the latest position. Most fraud was committed on the basis of evaluations. When there was a downward movement in value it was known as an impaired value.

Cash Flow Statement – This looked at the actual figures in and out of the bank account.

Notes to the Accounts – The Statement of Accounts was a complex document and notes were used to explain items in greater detail.

Commercial Property Trading Account – This contained a lot of detail because the Council concentrated on trading and because of the need for transparency.

Collection Fund – This showed Council Tax and Business Rates movements and had to be kept as a separate and distinct record.

Annual Governance Statement – This was not based on figures but was a written explanation of how well managed and how well

governed the accounts were. It covered audit, complaints and comments and had been developed to overcome possible fraudulent practice. It provided transparency and explained the finances, risks and controls and suggested a way forward.

Audit Opinion / Glossary

This included any 'material' errors, which in the case of Breckland Council would be £1,000,000.

The Glossary covered the acronyms and abbreviations and explained the terms used.

In summary the Assistant Director - Governance explained that the Statement of Accounts was a very complex document which could become understandable with time and assistance. It formed an important part of the Council's business and was not optional. It needed to be robust and based on sound principles.

The Chief Accountant then presented a report recommending approval of the Statement of Accounts.

He told Members that the Audit Committee had gone through the accounts page by page and made a number of suggestions which had been put forward for adoption. He pointed out that balances had improved.

He highlighted one error concerning the amount for STRGL which should read £33,000 and should not be in brackets. (Page 12 of the Agenda Supplement).

The audit process had begun. Supporting information was being checked and a Governance Report would be produced in September. Previously this had been circulated to Members by e-mail. Subject to the auditors' comments the accounts would be published by the end of September.

A Member of the Labour Group thanked both officers for their excellent presentation. However, he was only interested in the surpluses and wanted to know what was going to be done with them. He was concerned that if the unitary recommendation for Local Government was agreed these assets might disappear. He wanted provision to be made to put money aside for the towns and villages to give something back to the people of Breckland before it was too late.

The Leader of the Council responded to this. He told Members that the Council was already investing in the community and he cautioned against over reacting. Whoever took over would look after the money.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee thanked both officers for their thorough answers and recommended approval.

Another Member queried the amount of money spent on the PFI, which he considered to be excessive. The Chief Accountant explained that the amount was offset by a Government Grant each year and that the figure only replaced what the Council had been paying out on leisure facilities previously.

Action By

RESOLVED:

- (a) to approve the draft statement of accounts;
- (b) to approve the Annual Governance Statement; and
- (c) to note the matters highlighted in section 3 of the report.

**79/08 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (AGENDA
ITEM 15)**

RESOLVED that Mrs J Ball replace Mrs P Quadling on the General Purposes Committee.

Action By

The meeting closed at 11.40 am

CHAIRMAN